



United States Department of Agriculture
Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service

May 4, 2011

SUBJECT: Guidance for Research Project Annual Reports (AD-421) for Fiscal Year 2011
(October 1, 2010, to September 30, 2011)

TO: Area Directors
Center Directors
Institute Directors
Laboratory Directors
Research Leaders

FROM: Judith B. St. John /s/
Associate Administrator

**REPORTS ARE DUE TO THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL PROGRAMS NO LATER
THAN OCTOBER 1, 2011 – AREA OFFICES WILL ESTABLISH EARLIER
DEADLINES FOR THEIR REVIEW PROCESS**

This memorandum calls for the annual project reports (AD-421) that are required for each research project and provides guidance for reporting for FY 2011. There are no major changes for FY2011. Please read these instructions and guidance carefully. Any changes in guidance from last year will be noted in **red** text.

The annual reports are used in a myriad of ways. The reports provide data to meet reporting requirements for Congress, the White House Office of Management and Budget, stakeholders, and many others. In addition, they provide information for external program reviews and many internal uses and management functions, such as measuring progress toward the objectives put forth in the NP Action Plans. Some examples of uses and requirements are listed below:

- ARS budget requests to Congress, includes “significant accomplishments”
<http://www.arsnet.usda.gov/programinfo.htm>
- Government Performance and Results Act Requirements
- Annual Performance Reports
- Inquiries from Congress (e.g. Q&As) and from stakeholders, customers and industry
- Quarterly Ethics/EEO Reports
- Data for NP Annual Reports (<http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/programs.htm>),
- Data for NP Assessments and for upcoming workshops
- Information for official speeches



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- Data for identification of potential for future collaborations
- Data for various analyses and presentations for management, AC, and USDA, and for meetings with commodity groups, stakeholders, and other Federal agencies.

Accomplishments in annual reports should be written to speak to lay persons who have an interest in agriculture. **The audience for your report may vary from Congressional staff to farmers to students, none of whom are likely to be interested in the technical details of the project.** They will be very interested in what you have accomplished and its impact on agriculture and society--the "So what?" of the research. We use your information to inform a general public so please don't mention names or provide details such as the location of select agents and radioisotopes that might elicit the interest of nefarious parties. In rare instances, you may need to be circumspect to protect intellectual property. In those cases, please consult the Office of Technology Transfer to determine how to report such an accomplishment. These reports are necessary and valuable to ARS so please devote the time needed to interpret your findings for the public; no one else can do it as well as you.

Annual Reports for Subordinate Research Projects:

Each subordinate research project (all non "D" projects) must have its own annual report, consisting only of Question 3 - Progress Report. Major accomplishments of the subordinate research projects (accomplishments at the level where they are candidates for inclusion in the National Program Annual Report, budget documents, and/or Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) reports) should be captured and reported in the parent research project's AD-421, with credit as appropriate.

For further information and instructions on preparation of the Annual Reports, see the attached general instructions for completing the questions in the AD-421s. For more indepth instructions, examples, and data entry (into ARIS) guidance, see Chapter 15E in the ARIS Online Handbook (<http://www.npstaff.ars.usda.gov/ARIS/Manual>).

2 Enclosures:

Attachment 1 – FY 2011 Guidance for Completing the Questions in the AD-421s
Appendix A – FY 2011 List of Subordinate Projects Requiring Full Annual Reports

cc: w/encl.

National Program Leaders, ONP
Program Analysts, ONP
Area Program Analysts
J. Stetka, ONP
S. Drumm, ONP

FY 2011 Guidance for Completing the Questions in the AD-421

Note: Complete guidance, data entry instructions, and examples can be found in the ARIS Online Handbook (currently being updated).

1. Background (automatically populated)

- ***1a. Objectives:*** Verbatim extract from the AD-416. No changes can be made to the objectives within the AD-421.
- ***1b. Approach:*** Verbatim extract from the AD-416. Author must edit to remove Biosafety Level (BSL) information only.

2. Milestones for FY2011 *(This section will not be posted on the web).*

- List currently approved Milestones that were to be addressed in FY2011.
- Choose the status of each Milestone from the List of Values provided. If “Milestone Not Met” is chosen, a reason must also be chosen from the List of Values provided.
- **If no Milestones were to be addressed in the FY, check the box “No Milestones for FY” and provide a brief explanation.**

Status Options:

- Milestone Not Met
- Milestone Substantially Met
- Milestone Fully Met

If “Milestone Not Met” is chosen, select one reason from the following:

- Critical vacancy
- Insufficient resources (lack of operational funds)
- Redirection (by Office of National Programs)
- No longer applies (Milestone no longer applicable)
- Other (a reason for not meeting the Milestone other than the options above); if “other” is chosen, a brief description of why should be provided.

Optional: Add a one- or two-sentence explanation for the status of a Milestone in the space provided (**do not put the explanation with the actual milestone**. It should be entered in the separate field provided (500 characters max).

3. Progress Report:

- For “D” projects, the progress report is **required**. The progress should indicate how it relates to the components within the National Program Action Plan (see below) as well as how it relates to the objectives of the project.
- Describe what was done during the year, regardless of whether or not the work has a significant accomplishment to report.
- The National Program, Component, and Problem Statement (NP/C/PS) should not be written into the text of the progress report. A List of Values (LOV) will be provided in ARIS to select the NP/C/PS(s). **NOTE: The NP/C/PS is only a requirement for “D” projects.** (see ARIS Handbook for more detailed information).

- Limited to 3,200 characters.
- **Avoid use of technical jargon, acronyms, CRADA partner names, and scientists' names.**
- Question 3 is the only question answered for subordinate project reports, except for the projects listed in Appendix A.

Requirement for Subordinate Project Reports: The ADODR is required to document monitoring activities for the project within Question 3. They must state the methods used for monitoring, such as meetings, conference calls, site visits, etc. (refer to the ADODR P&P for more information on this requirement (<http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/pdf/701-0.pdf>).

4. **Accomplishments:**

List the significant research accomplishments in order of importance during FY 2011.

(Not all projects are expected to have a significant accomplishment each year.)

- Definition: An accomplishment is a completed scientific effort that can be expected to have scientific or technical impact.
- Each accomplishment should be described in a single paragraph, the meaning of which can stand on its own.
- The accomplishment should be written in a concise four- to six-sentence paragraph, addressing each of the following:
 - Short title;
 - Description of the problem or question investigated;
 - Description of what was accomplished;
 - Description of the actual or potential impact on solving significant problems facing U.S. agriculture.
 - Note: It is helpful to state "ARS Researchers at (city, state)"in the text of the accomplishment.
 - **The accomplishment should be written in a flowing paragraph. DO NOT use actual "labels" for each of the sentences (e.g. "Description:", "Impact:").**
- The National Program, Component, and Problem Statement (NP/C/PS) should not be written into the text of the Accomplishment(s). A List of Values (LOV) will be provided in ARIS to select the NP/C/PS(s). (see ARIS Manual for more detailed information).
- **Avoid use of technical jargon, acronyms, CRADA partner names, and scientists' names.**

5. **Significant activities that support special target populations.**

- Enter information only if you have specific activities or special outreach efforts that directly benefit USDA target populations (small farms--defined as under \$250,000 annual gross receipts--or "socially disadvantaged/limited resource/historically under-served" producers).
- If there are no activities to report here, simply state "**none.**"

6. **Technology Transfer** *(This section will not be posted to the Web)*

(See the ARIS Online Manual for a detailed explanation on how to enter the information for each of these categories.)

The system will automatically propagate much of the data based on the in-house project number the items are associated with. An additional field is provided for each item and must be completed with detailed information for each of the technologies listed. The

detailed information answers: What is the technology, How was it transferred, Who are the customers/Users, and What is the demonstrated or anticipated impact and/or outcomes.

Technology transfer categories listed in this section includes:

- Number of New CRADAs
- Number of Active CRADAs (does not include the new CRADAs)
- Number of New/Active MTAs (outgoing/giving only)
- Number of New Invention Disclosures Submitted
- Number of New Patent Applications Filed
- Number of New Germplasm Releases
- Number of New Commercial Licenses Executed
- Number of Web Sites Managed
- Other Technology Transfer

7. International Cooperation/Collaboration *(This section will not be posted to the Web)*

- Does the project have any international cooperation/collaboration? If yes, then the country the collaboration is with should be listed as well as agreement number if the collaboration is associated with an “official” agreement.
- **Provide a description of the collaboration/cooperation, including the name of the international institution and a brief description of the research and the overall objectives of the activity. Do not list Scientists’s names.**
- Additional information that should be provided includes: how the work exchange takes place, i.e. email exchanges, visits to labs, sending materials, etc.; and if funded, who is funding the activity, even if informal.
- If there is no “formal” agreement in place, but there is international cooperation/collaboration, then only the description field should be completed.
- Information should be entered in complete sentences.
- **Scientists’ names should NOT be listed.**

Publications

- Publications that meet the criteria stated below will be automatically propagated into the annual report. Additional publications can be entered as appropriate.
- **Only peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals (no proceedings), review articles that are related to the subject of the project, book or book chapters related to the subject of the project, Germplasm Registration Articles, and Natural Resources Research Updates (NRRU) can be listed here.**
- Enter only the publications published in print or electronically during FY2011 (include publications from subordinate projects that include an ARS author).
- Prior year publications can be listed, if applicable to the research, and have not been entered on previous annual reports. Do not list articles that are “in press.”
- There must be an approved ARS-115 Manuscript Approval for each publication. The citation information from the ARS-115 will propagate to the AD-421 when the ARS-115 Log Number is chosen.

Appendix A (FY 2011)

List of Subordinate Projects Requiring Full Annual Reports (Answer all Questions):

Project Number	Mode Code	Location	Title
All 1950 Agreements	1950-00	Boston, MA	Tufts Human Nutrition Research Center
All 6250 Agreements	6250-00	Houston, TX	Baylor (Human Nutrition Research
All 6251 Agreements	6251-00	Little Rock, AR	Human Nutrition Research